

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 OES-06 AID-05 IO-13 ACDA-07
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DODE-00 PM-04 TRSE-00 OPIC-03 EB-08 COME-00 OMB-01
CU-02 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 MCT-01 L-03 /112 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 020955

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: CALL BY KEWAL SINGH ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON

SUMMARY: INDIAN AMBASSADOR KEWAL SINGH HELD A FRIENDLY
HOUR-LONG MEETING JANUARY 27 WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON. COMMERCIAL MINISTER DIXIT AND POLITICAL OFFICER
RAJAN SAT IN ALONG WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS AND
THE INDIA DESK OFFICER. SINGH DESCRIBED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
IN INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA AND STRESSED THE URGENCY OF ENSURING
ENRICHED URANIUM SUPPLY FOR TARAPUR. SINGH ALSO REVIEWED
FORTHCOMING SUBCOMMISSION ACTIVITIES. ATHERTON INDICATED WE
WOULD BE CLOSELY FOLLOWING THE MARCH NACC MEETING IN DELHI.
END SUMMARY.

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1. INDO-U.S. RELATIONS/INDIAN ELECTION--KEWAL SINGH OPENED
THE MEETING BY RECOUNTING WITH CONSIDERABLE DELIGHT HIS EX-
CHANGE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AT THE WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION
(NEW DELHI 1063). THE AMBASSADOR WENT ON TO SUMMARIZE RE-
CENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA INCLUDING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF
ELECTIONS. HE ASSURED THAT THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE "ABSOLUTE-
LY FAIR" AND THAT THE PRESS AND THE OPPOSITION WERE GENUINE-

LY FREE TO SAY AND DO WHAT THEY WISHED SHORT OF INSTIGATING

VIOLENCE. ATHERTON COMMENTED WE ARE AVOIDING OFFICIAL COMMENTS ABOUT DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA AND AS THE AMBASSADOR KNEW HAD RESERVED JUDGMENT OFFICIALLY ABOUT THE MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN THE EMERGENCY. WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID, HOWEVER, REFLECTS OUR FEELINGS ABOUT LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.

2. TARAPUR --KEWAL SINGH SAID DISRUPTION AT THE TARAPUR REACTORS WAS A CERTAINTY IF THE FUEL WAS NOT DISPATCHED IN FEBRUARY. HE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF THE LICENSING PROBLEM BUT URGED THAT A SHORT-TERM SOLUTION BE FOUND IN VIEW OF THE NEED. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAS NOT PUBLICLY SPOKEN ABOUT THE TARAPUR PROBLEM BUT HAS RATHER SHOWN A MAXIMUM DESIRE TO COOPERATE. THE GOI WAS READY TO SATISFY THE USG ON SPENT FUEL. ATHERTON NOTED THAT NEW ADMINISTRATION ATTACHED IMPORTANCE TO NUCLEAR ISSUES AND WOULD BE MAKING OVERALL POLICY REVIEW. ATHERTON ASSURED SINGH THAT DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF THE TIME FACTOR AND WOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM WITH KNOWLEDGE GOI CONSIDERS THIS A MATTER OF URGENCY. SINGH CLAIMED THE GOI'S OVERALL VIEWS ON PROLIFERATION WERE AS FIRM AS THE USG'S. "WE ARE ABSOLUTELY IN ACCORD ON NON-PROLIFERATION...IT IS MADNESS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES" TO PURSUE WEAPONS PROGRAMS, WHICH HE SAID INDIA WOULD NEVER DO.

3. INDO-U.S. SUBCOMMISSION ACTIVITIES--KEWAL SINGH
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TICKED OFF SEVERAL EVENTS ILLUSTRATING PROGRESS IN THE SUBCOMMISSION'S WORK. HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING IN FEBRUARY AND HOPED APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS COULD RECEIVE THE PRINCIPAL INDIAN BUSINESSMEN ATTENDING. HE SAID HE WAS DELIGHTED (AS IS DELHI, HE INDICATED) BY THE SPECIAL ARTICLE ON INDO-U.S. COMMERCIAL COOPERATION IN THIRD COUNTRIES THAT OPIC IS RELEASING. WITH REGARD TO THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SUBCOMMISSION MEETING IN APRIL, THE AMBASSADOR SAID THE INDIAN DELEGATION WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC ISSUES AS SUGGESTED EARLIER BY U.S. SIDE. IN CONTEXT OF THE SUBCOMMISSION DISCUSSION, KEWAL SINGH AND DIXIT EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE USG MIGHT BE CONSIDERING THE IMPOSITION OF NON-TARIFF BARRIERS ON SUGAR AND LEATHER PRODUCTS FROM INDIA. REGARDING OTHER SUBCOMMISSIONS KEWAL SINGH CALLED AGAIN FOR AN INCREASE IN FLOW OF SCHOLARS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, FOR EXAMPLE, BY EXPANDING THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FROM TEN TO ONE HUNDRED (SIC) GRANTEES, AND HE AFFIRMED THAT SEVEN

ADDITIONAL S AND T PROJECTS HAD BEEN APPROVED. HIS IMPRESSION WAS THERE WAS SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR A FRUITFUL S AND T SUBCOMMISSION MEETING IN MARCH BUT HE WOULD CHECK BACK TO DELHI FOR ITS VIEW.

4. NON-ALIGNED COORDINATING COMMITTEE (NACC) MEETING - ATHERTON SAID THE EMBASSY IN DELHI WOULD BE FOLLOWING THE NACC MEETING CLOSELY AND REPORTING BACK SINCE WE WERE INTERESTED IN HOW THE ISSUES WERE BEING DEALT WITH. INDIA'S

EFFORTS AT COLOMBO FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE TREATMENT OF THE ISSUES WERE APPRECIATED AND WE HOPED IT WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY SUCH A ROLE. KEWAL SINGH COMMENTED THAT THE EMBASSY AND THE CHARGE WERE WELCOME TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH MEA AND HE WOULD COMMUNICATE THE DEPARTMENT'S INTEREST IN HAVING COOPERATIVE EXCHANGES ABOUT NACC TO THE GOI.

5. SOUTH ASIA - AT THE END OF THE HOUR KEWAL SINGH BRIEF-
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LY SURVEYED INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. HE SAID THERE WAS OPTIMISM IN BOTH ISLAMABAD AND DELHI ABOUT THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS AND HE BELIEVED IT WOULD CONTINUE. SINCE THE PAKISTANIS SOMETIMES SUGGEST THEY WANT TO MOVE MORE SLOWLY, THEY COULD SET THE APPROPRIATE PACE IF THEY WISHED. HOWEVER, THE RELEASE OF THE HIJACKERS, HE CONTINUED, "DEEPLY PAINED AND DISAPPOINTED" THE GOI. IT WAS A MEASURE OF INDIA'S DESIRE TO CONTINUE THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS THAT IT DID NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO BECOME INDIGNANT. DUBS INDICATED THAT THE U.S. SHARED INDIA'S REGRET AT THE HANDLING OF THE MATTER AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE BECAUSE OF OUR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT TERRORISM. ON FARAKKA KEWAL SINGH SAID HE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THIS QUESTION SINCE THE MIDDLE 1960'S AND COULD ASSURE US THE CURRENT INDIAN POSITION WAS MOST FORTHCOMING, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION HAD RETURNED TO DACCA FOR CONSULTATIONS. ATHERTON EMPHASIZED OUR HOPE THAT THE TALKS WOULD SOON RESUME.
VANCE

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